

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 are pending, with claims 1, 9, 20, 22 and 25 being independent. Claims 1, 9 and 22 have been amended, and claims 23-29 have been added. No new matter has been added.

Independent claims 1 and 22, and their dependent claims 2-8, have been rejected as being anticipated by Bonutti (U.S. Patent No. 6,010,525). Independent claim 9 and its dependent claims 10-19 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Bonutti in view of Standefer (U.S. Patent No. 3,392,894).

Independent claims 1 and 9, as amended, each recite, *inter alia*, "a body defining a tapered hole configured for guiding a member into a tube coupled to the body". Claim 22, as amended, recites, *inter alia*, "a guide means defining a tapered hole configured for guiding a member into a tube coupled to the guide means". Bonutti does not describe or suggest the claimed body or guide means. Recess 650, which the Examiner equates to the recited tapered hole, of suture retainer 622, which the Examiner equates to the recited body, is not configured to guide a member into a tube coupled to suture retainer 622. A member advanced into recess 650 is not guided through passages 660 or 662 because of the ledge at the interface between recess 650 and passages 660 and 662. Further, regarding claim 9, Standefer also fails to overcome the deficiencies of Bonutti.

For at least this reason, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 9 and 22 and their dependent claims 2-8 and 10-19.

Independent claim 20 and its dependent claim 21 have been rejected as being anticipated by Orchowski (U.S. Patent No. 5,474,562). Orchowski does not describe or suggest a method including separating a body and a member by passing the member through a slot in the body. Orchowski describes an apparatus and method for preparing an intraocular lens (IOL), which the Examiner apparently equates to the recited member, for insertion into a patient's eye through use of a compression chamber 10, which the Examiner apparently equates to the recited body. Compression chamber 10 includes a loading area 20 having a slot 36, which the Examiner equates to the recited slot. Orchowski, however, does not describe or suggest that the IOL is separated from compression chamber 10 by passing the IOL through slot 36. Rather, the IOL is

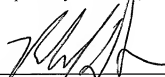
separated from compression chamber 10 by passing through truncated end 52 of distal tip 18 of compression chamber 10, as shown in Figs 1 and 9. See also col. 8, lines 4-8. For at least this reason, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 20 and its dependent claim 21.

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance.

Applicants do not acquiesce in the Examiner's characterizations of the art. For brevity and to advance prosecution, however, applicants may have not addressed all characterizations of the art and reserve the right to do so in further prosecution of this or a subsequent application. The absence of an explicit response by the applicants to any of the Examiner's positions does not constitute a concession of the Examiner's positions. The fact that applicants' comments have focused on particular arguments does not constitute a concession that there are not other arguments for patentability of the claims. All of the dependent claims are patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to the claims on which they depend.

Enclosed is payment authorization in the amount of \$550.00 for excess claim fees.
Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,



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